

March 12, 1959

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 399th Meeting
of the National Security Council,
Thursday, March 12, 1959

Present at the 399th NSC Meeting were the President of the United States, presiding; the Acting Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; and Mr. John S. Patterson for the Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization. Also present and participating in the Council actions below were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; and the Acting Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission. Also attending the meeting were the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs; Assistant Secretary of State Gerard C. Smith; Assistant Secretary of Defense John N. Irwin, II; The Assistant to the President; Special Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs and for Science and Technology; the White House Staff Secretary; the Assistant White House Staff Secretary; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

1. NSC 5904

(NSC 5410/1; NSC 5810/1; NSC 5904; NSC Actions Nos. 1077, 1102, 2039 and 2056; Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary dated January 7 and March 3, 9 and 10, 1959)

Mr. Gray explained that after discussion of the draft report on "U.S. Policy in the Event of War" (NSC 5904) at the Council meeting last week (March 5), the usual Draft Record of Action was circulated to the Planning Board for checking with each of their principals. In commenting upon the Draft Record the State and Defense Departments proposed certain revisions. Because of the importance of the subject, the President had authorized further consideration of these revisions by the Council as a whole at this morning's meeting.

Using the enclosure to the Memorandum of March 9, 1959, a copy of which is attached to this Memorandum, Mr. Gray pointed out that the first proposal for a change in the prior text of NSC 5904 came from the Department of State which desired to omit the phrase

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E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.4(b)

Agency Case NSC F89-724NLE Case 18-150-7By 265 NLE Date 12/8/75

"with the Sino-Soviet Bloc" so that the title of Section A would read simply: "U.S. Policy in the Event of General War." Mr. Gray explained that the State position on the title, as he understood it, was that general war with the U.S.S.R. would not necessarily mean general war with Communist China and that the assumption should not be made in the title. On the other hand Mr. Gray pointed out that this involved one of the most fundamental issues in NSC 5904 and that it had been his view that the two previous Council meetings gave clear guidance to the effect that in a general war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., Communist China would inevitably be involved.

The President commented that as he understood the previous Council guidance, the U.S. would attack Communist China in the event of general war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., only as necessary. The President said he agreed that the U.S. would have to be prepared to attack Communist China in the event of general war with the U.S.S.R. but would not automatically attack Communist China if that country could be isolated from the hostilities. As a historical precedent for this position, the President cited the fact of the long delay before the Soviet Union finally declared war and attacked Japan in World War II.

Mr. Gray pointed out his understanding that the language "as necessary" with respect to a U.S. attack on Communist China had been inserted at the Council's direction in the text of Paragraph 7 which provided the Policy Guidance. The words "as necessary" may perhaps also have been suggested for inclusion in Paragraph 2 of the Objectives although this was another point which was in dispute and where there was a difference of recollection as to whether the Council had agreed on the insertion in Paragraph 2. Indeed this was one of the splits which must be resolved.

The President said that it was his memory of the discussion of the problem of what the U.S. would do in the event of general war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. that the Council had decided to put the nations of the European Soviet Bloc in a special category. Selected targets in these European Bloc nations might have to be hit but we hoped to be able to avoid doing any more damage than necessary.

Mr. Gray then stated that it was his understanding that the Department of Defense would go along with the proposal of the State Department to change the title of Section A of NSC 5904 but that the Defense Department could not agree to the insertion of the words "as necessary" in Paragraph 2 of the Objectives. Secretary McElroy

confirmed Mr. Gray's understanding and explained the position of the Defense Department that the objectives should be to reduce the capabilities of Communist China to wage war against the U.S. and its allies but that a distinction should be made between the treatment accorded to Communist China and the treatment accorded to the U.S.S.R. in the event of general war.

Secretary Herter said that the State Department was prepared to accept the elimination of the words "as necessary" from Paragraph 2 if it was made crystal clear elsewhere in the paper that in the event of general war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., the U.S. would not automatically attack Communist China.

The President commented that our overall objective with respect to Communist China in the event of such a general war was to assure ourselves that we would not be in a situation of being attacked afresh by Communist China after we had defeated the Soviet Union in a general war. With respect to targets the President said he assumed that the targets we attacked would always be selected and not indiscriminate.

Secretary Herter repeated again his concern that NSC 5904 should not seem to indicate that a U.S. attack on Communist China would be automatic. He said that he was willing to see the words "as necessary" dropped from Paragraph 2 if Paragraph 7, where it had been agreed that these two words should be inserted, also stated that it was to be the controlling Policy Guidance. Mr. Gray suggested the wording of a footnote which would make clear that Paragraph 7 was indeed the controlling Policy Guidance and Secretary McElroy suggested that this language be placed in a footnote to Paragraph 7. The President gave his approval to this solution.

Mr. Gray then invited the attention of the Council to the additional change the State Department was now proposing to Paragraph 7 reading as follows:

"7. The United States should utilize all requisite force against selected targets in the USSR [;]* and as necessary in Communist China [European Bloc and non-European Bloc countries;]* to attain the above objectives. Military targets in other Bloc countries will be attacked as necessary. It is assumed that the peoples of these countries are not responsible for the acts of their governments and accordingly so far as consistent with military objectives military action against these countries should avoid non-military destruction and casualties.*

"*State proposals."

Mr. Gray pointed out that the State Department wished to add the underlined language to Paragraph 7 because it desired to make a distinction between the application of "all requisite force" against targets in the U.S.S.R., Communist China, and other Bloc countries.

With respect to the underlined language the President observed that it contained a view which he had himself stated and which he meant but he was not clear that the statement had to be included in the Policy Guidance.

Mr. Gray pointed out that there was another issue not so apparent to the naked eye which was involved in the bracketed language in Paragraph 7 which the State Department proposed that we should delete. Mr. Gray explained that if the language in brackets was left in the paragraph as the Department of Defense desired, it would provide the basis for action to carry out Paragraph 3 of the Objectives because it would permit the U.S. to destroy the puppet regimes in the Bloc countries by force if necessary. On the other hand, if the bracketed language was left out as the State Department desired, no Policy Guidance would be provided as to the destruction of the puppet regimes in the Bloc states.

Secretary Herter countered with the argument that the guidance which Defense sought, in this context, was actually provided in the next sentence which if the underlined language were accepted would read: "Limited targets in other Bloc countries will be attacked as necessary." The President said that he could not understand why if it was agreed to put in this particular sentence the State Department would also wish to delete the bracketed language. Secretary Herter then agreed to the inclusion of the language in brackets. It was then proposed to change the first of the underlined additional sentences to read as follows: "Military targets in Bloc countries other than the U.S.S.R. and Communist China will be attacked as necessary."

Secretary McElroy thought that the inclusion of this statement was redundant if the bracketed language were included. The President however said that he thought this was not case although perhaps the additional language proposed by the State Department to be added to Paragraph 7 was the result of some excess of caution. The President then suggested that perhaps this cautionary language could be inserted as a footnote or as a parenthetical note in the text. Secretary McElroy thought this to be a distinct improvement because after all what we were dealing with was an assumption and so described in the proposed text. The Council thereupon agreed to this solution.

Mr. Gray then invited the Council's attention to the last split view; namely, Paragraph 14 in Section B. He recalled that there had been a considerable number of versions proposed for acceptance as the Policy Guidance in Paragraph 14. Secretary Herter indicated that he had yet another version of Paragraph 14 which he would like the Council to look at and which read as follows:

"14. The United States should be prepared to utilize such force as is requisite to attain its objectives. If during the course of hostilities general war becomes a clear probability, the U.S. will have to decide in the light of the circumstances then existing whether it is in the U.S. interest to alter its original objectives."

After a short conference between Secretary Herter and Secretary McElroy, the latter stated that the language of this version proposed by the State Department appeared quite acceptable both to the Defense Department and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President said that the proposed language was also acceptable to him but warned that we could not make too many detailed military plans in advance of a war.

Mr. Gray then stated that he understood that the shorter version for the title of Section A had also been approved. There was no contrary view.

At this point General Twining said that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were worried about the present title of Section B reading as follows: "U.S. Policy in the Event of War in which the U.S.S.R. does not Participate." In view of the kind of assistance and participation which the U.S.S.R. could actually offer without necessarily participating as a belligerent, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would suggest the desirability of changing the title to read: "U.S. Policy in the Event of a War in which the U.S.S.R. does not Participate as a Belligerent."

Secretary Herter stated that this proposal involved no difficulty for the State Department. The President also agreed to the change in a slightly modified form.

The National Security Council:

- a. Discussed the statement of policy contained in NSC 5904, as revised in the last Council meeting; in the light of the suggestions proposed subsequently by the Departments

of State and Defense as indicated in the enclosure to the reference memorandum of March 9, 1959.

b. Adopted the draft statement of policy in the enclosure to the reference memorandum of March 9, 1959, subject to the following amendments:

- (1) Page 1, title of Section A: Delete the bracketed words and the footnotes thereto.
- (2) Page 1, paragraph 2: Delete the underlined words "as necessary" and the footnote thereto.
- (3) Page 2, paragraph 7: Revise to read as follows:

"*7. The United States should utilize all requisite force against selected targets in the USSR--and as necessary in Communist China, European Bloc and non-European Bloc countries--to attain the above objectives. Military targets in Bloc countries other than the USSR and Communist China will be attacked as necessary. (NOTE: It is assumed that the peoples of the Bloc countries other than the USSR and Communist China are not responsible for the acts of their governments and accordingly so far as consistent with military objectives military action against these countries should avoid non-military destruction and casualties.)

"* Paragraph 7 contains the controlling policy guidance with respect to military action to attain the foregoing objectives."

(4) Page 4, title to Section B: Reword as follows: "U.S. POLICY IN THE EVENT OF A WAR IN WHICH THE USSR IS NOT A BELLIGERENT*"

(5) Page 4, paragraph 14: Revise to read as follows:

"Policy Guidance

"14. The United States should be prepared to utilize such force as is requisite to attain its objectives. If during the course of hostilities general war becomes a clear probability, the United States will have to decide in the light of the circumstances then existing whether it is in the U.S. interest to alter its original objectives."

NOTE: The statement of policy, as adopted in b above, subsequently approved by the President; circulated as NSC 5904/1 as a planning guide for all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government, subject to the understanding that it will be reviewed annually.

2. SIGNIFICANT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING U.S. SECURITY

The Director of Central Intelligence opened his briefing with a statement that he particularly wished to discuss the recent developments in Iraq. The revolt, he said, had largely been confined to troops in the Mosul area and had been crushed.

[REDACTED]

We do not know what the precise situation in Mosul is at the present time.

Mr. Allen Dulles stated that the revolt had received physical as well as moral assistance from the UAR. For example, the so-called Mosul Radio was almost certainly a UAR operation. As late as Monday the UAR was still prepared to support the Iraqi rebels with aircraft and other military materiel but there was obviously no well thought-out plan in existence.

Mr. Dulles described the failure of the revolt as a serious blow to Nasser's prestige. For the time being the UAR position in Iraq was crippled. Some 69 Egyptian official personnel and their dependents have left Baghdad. Mr. Dulles predicted that the Iraqi Communists would now proceed to clean out thoroughly all the remaining pro-UAR support in Iraq. To indicate their control Mr. Dulles read a manifesto which had just been issued which used the well-known Leninist vocabulary. Meanwhile, the Baghdad radio and press have openly charged Nasser with being behind the plot and mobs in Baghdad had burned Nasser in effigy. The whole affair was a striking contrast to the events of the earlier revolt against the government of Nuri-Said.

Mr. Dulles stated that the Communists were today the only dynamic and well-organized element in Baghdad. Moscow is accusing the U. S. and the U.K. of organizing and supporting the plot against Qasim and is saying nothing against Nasser. There was little likelihood, thought Mr. Dulles, of any rapprochement between Qasim and Nasser. The latter is fully aware of the serious challenge represented by Qasim to Nasser's prestige in the Arab world. All in all, the situation is one of great gravity. This gravity is emphasized by the proximity of Kuwait to Iraq. Indeed, Nasser may be even now considering a counter coup in Kuwait. At this point Mr. Dulles called attention to a map and chart dealing with the oil reserves in the Middle East. After citing the statistics of the potentialities of the various fields, Mr. Dulles repeated his warning that we were facing a situation which should be a matter of grave

concern to us and which should have early and urgent consideration. He predicted that Prime Minister Macmillan and his associates would probably bring this situation up for discussion during the course of their visit to Washington next week.

Secretary Herter pointed out that the Foreign Minister of Iraq had called in our Ambassador and the British Ambassador in Iraq and stated to them that neither the U.S. nor the U.K. was in any way involved in the revolt.

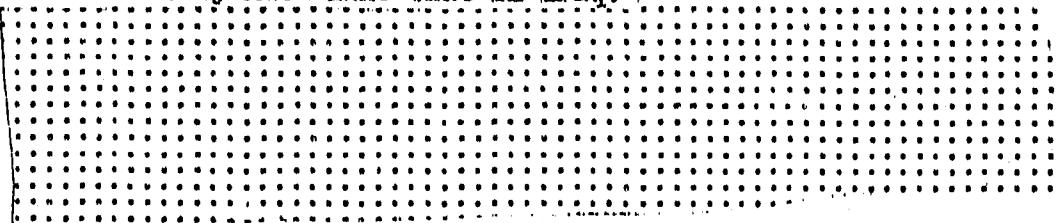
[REDACTED]

Turning to the situation in Berlin, Mr. Allen Dulles stated that Khrushchev had invited the East Germans to send a Government and Party delegation to Moscow in May. He thought that this move by Khrushchev was perhaps designed to make us think that at the time the delegations arrived in Moscow Khrushchev would sign a Treaty of Peace with the East Germans.

There had been a certain number of reports in the press that the morale and economic situation of the inhabitants of West Berlin had been somewhat lowered by recent developments. Investigation had proved that these press reports were erroneous. While morale was still very high in Berlin this morale was one based on the maintenance of a high degree of industrial and commercial activity and prosperity in West Berlin. A decline in the levels of such activity could result in a serious decline in morale. This was a situation which required careful watching.

After citing certain trade statistics, Mr. Dulles pointed out that much inter-zonal trade between East Germany and the Federal Republic was covered by general inter-allied agreement. In addition, however, there were many local agreements involving only East and West Germans. The President inquired what kinds of East German or West German personnel entered into such local agreements. Mr. Allen Dulles replied that these agreements were made by officials in the middle and lower ranges of the hierarchy. The President commented that this practice seemed to weaken Chancellor Adenauer's arguments against regarding the East Germans as agents of the Soviet Union.

With respect to Cambodia, Mr. Dulles described the situation there as very much like that in Iraq.



The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence on the subject, with specific reference to the implications of recent developments in Iraq, especially as regards the oil resources of the area; and the situations in Berlin and Cambodia.

3. PROBLEMS ILLUSTRATED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEAR EAST AND THE TAIWAN STRAIT

(Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated March 4, 1959)

In his initial comment on the Discussion Paper prepared by the NSC Planning Board, Mr. Gray read a portion of the introductory statement which praised the firmness of purpose and the positive action that the U.S. had taken and attributed to it the thwarting of Communist efforts toward expanding the Sino-Soviet sphere of influence. He also noted the caveat that conclusions to be drawn from the Lebanon and Taiwan Strait operations might not be universally applicable.

Mr. Gray then invited the Council's attention to the first problem illustrated in the Discussion Paper in Paragraph 2 on Page 1. This problem was described as follows: "U.S. prestige has become closely identified with the maintenance of the Chinese

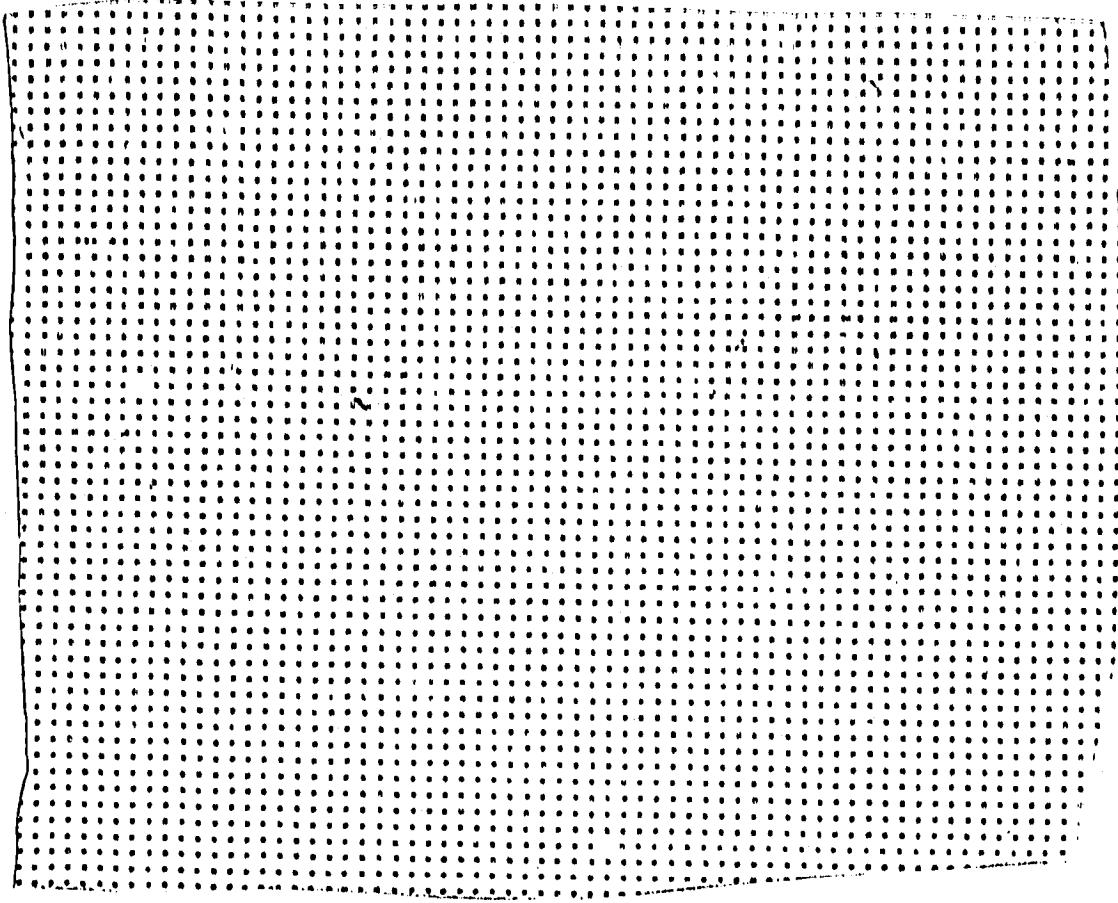
Nationalists on the Offshore Islands. However, U.S. allies have not publicly supported the U.S. position with respect to these Islands." Pointing out that the Planning Board had scheduled a review of U.S. policy toward the Far East for the month of May, Mr. Gray suggested that the Council not discuss this problem in detail at this meeting.

Secretary Herter commented that he had seen somewhere a statement that the Chinese Communists were now engaged in producing transport planes for the use of paratroopers. If true, would this indicate a Chinese Communist intention to attack Taiwan? In reply neither Mr. Allen Dulles nor General Twining thought they could perceive any direct relation between these newly designed Chinese Communist planes and an attack on Taiwan in the near future.

Mr. Gray then asked the Council to look at the second problem in the Discussion Paper (Paragraph 3, Page 1) dealing with "The obscurity surrounding the supply and casualty picture in Quemoy in September 1958 which demonstrated the danger of relying on an ally for information which may vitally affect U.S. decision-making." In such situations the U.S. should have and make use of an independent capability for objective verification of tactical and logistical facts and plans. Mr. Gray also commented briefly on information to the effect that despite their agreement to the contrary, the Chinese Nationalists were refusing to reduce their garrisons on the Offshore Islands. He then asked General Twining to comment generally on this second problem.

General Twining confined himself to stating his belief that this second problem made a very good point. The U.S. ought indeed to have such an independent capability as suggested by the statement.

Mr. Gray next invited the Council's attention to the statement of the third problem as set forth in Paragraph 4, Page 2 which stated that:



Mr. Gray then singled out a related problem which had been raised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who felt that military and naval commanders in the Taiwan Strait were in effect without adequate political guidance to permit them to make sound military decisions in certain contingencies and that perhaps U.S. political authorities were not sufficiently aware of the effects of restrictions on the military actions which might be deemed necessary by local commanders.

Having enlarged somewhat on this problem, Mr. Gray invited the comments of General Twining. General Twining said that of course the Taiwan Strait operation had been extremely complicated. We had tried as best we could to foresee the problems which would confront our military commanders in the area but of course we could not foresee everything at all times. Accordingly, commanders like Admiral Smoot had had to come back to the Joint Chiefs again and again with operational questions. It would of course be better if in the future we could give clearer guidance in advance to our military commanders in such operations, difficult as it would be to do so.

Mr. Gray then turned to the problem set forth in Paragraph 6 on Page 2 and also Paragraph 10 on Page 3. These paragraphs dealt with such operational problems as obtaining as far in advance as possible over-flight, staging rights, and arrangements on the Status of Forces as well as with the political difficulties encountered with certain governments in connection with the use of U.S. bases. There was no comment on this problem and accordingly Mr. Gray turned to the problem set forth in Paragraph 7 on Page 2 which dealt with a related but broader point. This was the "need for arrangements for the use of alternate air bases to avoid or minimize congestion in the conduct of such operations". Mr. Gray pointed out that we may be faced with situations in which we have the troops, the aircraft, and the supplies needed to meet a crisis of the Lebanon or Quemoy type, but are unable to move the forces or supplies through or over certain countries without serious difficulties. Mr. Gray again called on General Twining for comment. General Twining replied that the situation described in this statement of the problem simply reflected a very serious fact of life. /.....

..... This was indeed a very important problem.

Mr. Gray then turned to the problem set forth in Paragraph 8 on Page 3. He noted that studies of the Lebanon and Taiwan Strait operations had brought to light certain administrative problems concerning the distribution of broad funding authorization that indicated that unless supplemental funding is requested, as is being done, for the cost of the Lebanon and Quemoy operations, certain Service programs would have to be curtailed to support contingency operations.

Mr. Gray called on the Director of the Bureau of the Budget for comment on this problem. Mr. Stans replied that he had very little to say on the subject. We have indeed put in supplementals for the expenses of the Lebanon and Quemoy operations. If such operations put an added strain on funds available for the Services, we would have to meet this added strain.

Mr. Gray then turned to the last problem as set forth in Paragraph 9 on Page 3 noting that "the U.S. must take timely action, in contingency situations, to convince the U.S. public and U.S. allies that contemplated or actual operations are for the security of the Free World." Mr. Gray added that he had hoped to have the views of Mr. George Allen on this problem but that Mr. Allen had been unable to be present at the meeting this morning. He suggested

that perhaps Secretary Herter would care to comment. Secretary Herter replied that operations such as those in Lebanon and the Taiwan Strait had to be dealt with in their total context. We had to play much of this by ear. While there had not been any serious problem with respect to the Lebanon operation, it was true that in the Far East many of our allies felt that our operation was primarily our own affair. This was indeed a very real problem.

When Mr. Gray indicated that this covered the problems raised in the Discussion Paper, the President said that he must state that this kind of study was the kind he liked. There was much to be said for the value of a little self-analysis.

Secretary Anderson commented on the powerful effect of our actions in Lebanon and the Taiwan Strait as indicated by the impact of these operations on officials of certain foreign governments with whom Secretary Anderson had discussed them. These officials felt that our two actions proved that we were really ready to intervene to support small countries which were threatened by aggression. Until these two operations had actually occurred, some of these foreign governments had doubted whether the U.S. would really undertake to intervene.

The National Security Council:

- a. Noted and discussed the Discussion Paper on the subject transmitted by the reference memorandum of March 4, 1959.
- b. Noted the statement by the President citing the usefulness of such studies.

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